

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00  
USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 COME-00  
EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 IO-13 ACDA-10 OMB-01 TRSE-00  
CU-04 MCT-01 OPR-02 A-01 SY-05 OC-06 CCO-00 /109 W  
-----031602Z 111117 /41

O R 031435Z MAY 77

FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1667

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

UNCLAS BELFAST 156

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, UK, EI

SUBJECT: LOYALIST GENERAL STRIKE: FIRST HOURS

REF: (A) BELFAST 152 (B) BELFAST 151

1. LOYALIST GENERAL STRIKE WHICH BEGAN AT MIDNIGHT  
APPEARS TO BE HAVING MIXED SUCCESS IN BELFAST AND  
THROUGHOUT PROVINCE. ABOUT 80 PER CENT OF THE  
NEIGHBORHOOD SHOPS IN NON-CATHOLIC AREAS BELFAST ARE  
CLOSED. IN SHANKILL, SANDY ROW, CASTLEREAGH AND CREGAGH  
AREAS CLOSURE IS COMPLETE. ABOUT HALF BUSES ARE RUNNING  
IN BELFAST. ALMOST ALL SCHOOLS ARE OPEN BUT ATTENDANCE  
SHARPLY REDUCED IN THOSE DRAWING STUDENTS FROM PROTESTANT  
HOUSING PROJECTS. MOST LARGE FACTORIES IN PROVINCE ARE  
WORKING BUT CONSIDERABLE ABSENTEEISM REPORTED EXCEPT IN  
LONDONDERRY AREA. THERE ARE PICKETS AT FACTORIES BUT SO  
FAR NO VIOLENT INCIDENTS REPORTED. REVEREND IAN PAISLEY  
PICKETED AT GENERAL ELECTRIC FACTORY AT LARNE AND LATER  
AT GROUNDS STORMONT. IMPORTANT LARNE FERRY AND CONTAINER  
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PORT CLOSED BY ACTION ABOUT 30 DOCKERS. TRAINS RUNNING  
NORMALLY EXCEPT ON BANGOR-BELFAST (COMMUTER) LINE WHICH  
DAMAGED BY BOMB EARLY MORNING HOURS TODAY. NIGHT SHIFT WORKERS  
WALKED OUT AT HARLAND AND WOLFF SHIPYARDS AND SHORTS AIRCRAFT  
FACTORY, BUT ABOUT 65 PER CENT OF WORKERS BOTH PLANTS SHOWED  
UP FOR MORNING SHIFT. THERE SOME FACTORIES CLOSED IN  
PORTADOWN AREA BUT GOODYEAR REPORTS BETTER ATTENDANCE THAN

USUAL. GASOLINE TANKERS ARE NOT RPT NOT OPERATING, POSING POTENTIAL PROBLEM SINCE MANY OUTLETS HAD SUPPLIES EXHAUSTED BY PANIC BUYING.

2. IT MAY NEVER BE KNOWN HOW MUCH EFFECTIVENESS OF STRIKE DETERMINED BY INTIMIDATION AND HOW MUCH BY SYMPATHY. ALL MEDIA FEATURING NEWS OF WEEKEND OPINION POLL FOR BBC NORTHERN IRELAND TELEVISION IN WHICH IT REVEALED 73 PER CENT WORKING MALE POPULATION DISAPPROVED OF STRIKE BUT 35 PER CENT EXPECTED EVENTUALLY TO BE INVOLVED. CONGEN NOTES HOWEVER THIS POLL TAKEN IN GREATER BELFAST AREA AND MAY NOT RPT NOT ACCURATELY REFLECT ATTITUDES IN COUNTRYSIDE, FROM WHICH ERNEST BAIRD HAS SAID MOST SUPPORT FOR STRIKE WOULD COME. ALL CONGEN EMPLOYEES ARE AT WORK AND NONE WERE HARASSED EN ROUTE. UP TO NOW 60 CASES OF INTIMIDATION HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO POLICE AND IT IS BELIEVED THERE MANY OTHERS UNREPORTED. ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY (RUC) IS PROMINENT IN DEALING WITH INCIDENTS AND NORTHERN IRELAND SECRETARY OF STATE DON CONCANNON HAS STATED ARMY WILL NOT RPT NOT BE USED TO BREAK PICKET LINES. ONE UNIT OF ULSTER DEFENSE REGIMENT (COUNTY DOWN) RESISTED FULL TIME DUTY UNTIL ASSURED THEY WOULD NOT BE USED AGAINST STRIKERS. BELFAST PEACE PEOPLE HAVE VOLUNTEERED TO ESCORT WORKERS AND WERE ACTIVE THIS MORNING IN ORMEAU AREA ATTEMPTING PERSUADE SHOPKEEPERS TO OPEN.

3. OUTLOOK IS UNCERTAIN. MEMBER OF UNIONIST ACTION COUNCIL HAS CLAIMED THERE MORE RESPONSE TO STRIKE THAN IN FIRST DAY 1974 ACTION. CONTINUATION ELECTRICITY SUPPLY WILL BE CRITICAL. CONGEN NOTES BALLYLUMFORD POWER STATION WORKERS UNCLASSIFIED

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HAVE NOT RPT NOT SAID THEY OPPOSED STRIKE BUT THAT THEY WOULD WAIT AND SEE WHAT IS REACTION OTHER WORKERS. ALL MEDIA FEATURING NEWS THAT BRITISH SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENSE SAID LAST NIGHT THAT ARMY WOULD NOT RPT NOT BE ABLE TO GUARANTEE ESSENTIAL SERVICES, INCLUDING ELECTRICITY WATER AND SEWAGE. CONGEN HAS UNCONFIRMED REPORT ELECTRICITY HAS BEEN CUT IN PARTS OF COUNTY DOWN.

4. PROVISIONAL IRA GENERALLY QUIET BUT THERE ONE LARGE BOMB EXPLODED OUTSIDE CENTRAL BELFAST SHOP SHORTLY BEFORE NOON.

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:**  
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**To:** LONDON STATE  
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